



Creating Metaphors

Adapted from The Courage to Teach, Parker Palmer, pp. 148-150 by Gene Thompson-Grove.

Time

65 minutes

1. Fill in the blank: When I am at my best as a [teacher, administrator, librarian, counselor], I am _____ . Write your metaphor on a post-it note.
2. [Optional] Underneath the written description, draw a picture, symbol, or some other graphic representation of your metaphor.
3. Respond in your journal: What guidance might this metaphor offer me in tough or sticky situations? What are the “shadows” of this metaphor? (10 minutes for steps 1-3)
4. In triads, the colleagues discuss each of their metaphors in turn. The first presenter explains their metaphor (using the journal writing), and answers *just a few* clarifying questions from the rest of the group.
Then the presenter is silent and listens to the group members discuss what they heard. What did we hear? What are some additional strengths of this metaphor? What might be some additional shadows of this metaphor?
The presenter then comes back into the discussion, and talks with their colleagues about what especially resonated for them while listening.
Then, the next person presents.
(Each of the three presentation/discussion “rounds” takes about 15 minutes)
5. Once all of the group members’ metaphors have been discussed, they may want to write once again to their journal writing in response to the following prompt:
Parker Palmer says he uses his metaphor to “...return me in imagination to the inner landscape of identity and integrity where my deepest guidance is to be found (page 150).” How might your metaphor impact your future practice in a similar way? (5 minutes for writing)
6. Debrief about the process as a group. What did we learn? What should we do differently next time? (5 minutes for debriefing)